

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-02 AEC-11 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00

CIEP-03 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FPC-01 H-03 INR-11

INT-08 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-07 RSC-01 SAM-01

SCI-06 SP-03 SS-20 STR-08 TRSE-00 FRB-03 AGR-20 SWF-02

PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 IO-14 SIL-01 LAB-06 DRC-01 /217 W

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P R 252134Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6031

INFO USUN NEW YORK 843

UNCLAS CARACAS 9522

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENGR PFOR VE US

SUBJ: FURTHER POLITICAL REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S DETROIT ENERGY SPEECH

REF: CARACAS 9503

BEGIN SUMMARY: LOCAL POLITICAL RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT FORD'S DETROIT SPEECH HAS ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION BEEN STRONGLY IN SUPPORT OF GOV'S POLICY ON PETROLEUM PRICES AND CRITICAL OF THE PRESIDENT'S "THREATS" DIRECTED AT OPEC COUNTRIES. IN ADDITION TO THE SUGGESTION THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ ADDRESS UNGA ON BEHALF OF OPEC STATES REPORTED SEPARATELY (REFTEL), A CONGRESSIONAL LEADER HAS PROPOSED CONFERENCE OF OIL CONSUMING COUNTRIES FROM THIRD WORLD AND OPEC. END SUMMARY

1. GOVERNING ACCION DEMOCRATICA DEPUTY JUAN MANUEL SUCRE TRIAS, IN ONE OF SHARPEST COMMENTS REPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS OF SEPTMEBER 25, CHARGED PRESIDENT FORD'S SPEECHES HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE DESTINY OF U.S. IS IN THE HANDS OF IRRESPONSIBLE LEADERS. SUCRE SAID OPEC WILL BE STRENGTHENED BY FORD'S ATTACK INSTEAD OF BEING DESTROYED

CLAIMING FORD IS BADLY INFORMED AND ADVISED ON OIL ISSUE, AD LEADER
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CELESTINO ARMAS STATED SITUATION COULD "SERIOUSLY AFFECT" RELATIONS

BETWEEN DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED NATIONS. INTERIOR MINISTER LUIS PINERUA ORDAZ, ON OTHER HAND, DENIED THAT FORD'S SPEECH COULD AFFECT U.S.-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS.

2. COPEI SECRETARY GENERAL PEDRO PABLO AGUILAR REITERATED THAT THE GOV OIL POLICY IS SUPPORTED BY ALL VENEZUELAN'S REGARDLESS OF PARTY AFFILIATION OR ECONOMIC INTEREST. FORMER PRESIDENT RAFAEL CALDERA AGREED, SAYING DEFENSE OF NATION'S PRIMARY NATURAL RESOURCE IS "SOLID DUTY OF ALL." CALDERA DESCRIBED FORD'S POSITION AS "MISTAKEN AND UNJUST." COPEI LEADER VALMORE ACEVEDO CLAIMED THE U.S. IS THE CHIEF PREPETRATOR OF A SITUATION IN WHICH RESOURCES ARE BEING DIVIDED UP UNEQUALLY AMONG NATIONS OF WORLD. EX-MINISTER OF MINES AND HYDROCARBONS HUGO PEREZ LA SALVIA TOLD PRESS FORD'S ATTITUDE IS REFLECTION OF HIS "INCAPACITY TO CONFRONT OR CONTAIN INFLATIONARY SPIRAL" NOW EXISTING IN U.S. LA SALVIA CALLED ON THE PETROLEUM REVERSION COMMISSION TO SPEED UP ITS WORK ON LAW TO NATIONALIZE VENEZUELAN PETROLEUM INDUSTRY.

3. OTHER OPPOSITION LEADERS WERE EVEN MORE CRITICAL OF FORD'S SPEECH. FORMER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF PEOPLES ELECTORAL MOVEMENT (MEP), JESUS ANGEL PAZ GALARRAGA, SAID BEST RESPONSE TO FORD'S REMARKS WOULD BE IMMEDIATE NATIONALIZATION OF OIL INDUSTRY. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICAN UNION (URD) DEPUTY RAMON TENORIO SIFONTES CLAIMED FORD'S LATEST "THREATS" AIMED AT BLOCKING NATIONALIZATION OF VENEZUELAN OIL INDUSTRY AND OPEC'S PRICE AND PRODUCTION POLICIES. FORMER MAS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE JOSE VICENTE RANGEL CHARGED FORD IS BEHOLDEN TO "POWERFUL INTERESTS" AND WAS PLACED IN PRESIDENCY TO PROTECT THOSE INTERESTS. RANGEL ADDED THAT FORD "IS CLOSELY LINKED TO MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX OF U.S. AND HAS NO COMMITMENT TO AMERICAN PEOPLE."

4. GONZALO RAMIREZ CUBILLAN, PRESIDENT OF CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, DEFENDED GOV'S PETROLEUM POLICY SAYING NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY ARGUMENT ADVANCED BY FORD IS ALSO VENEZUELA'S BASIS FOR SUSTAINING ITS POLICY ON PETROLEUM PRICES. RAMIREZ PROPOSED THAT VENEZUELA AND OTHER OPEC COUNTRIES CONVOKE A CONFERENCE OF OIL CONSUMING NATIONS FROM THE THIRD WORLD TO DISCUSS PRICES OF PETROLEUM AND OTHER RAW MATERIALS. HE THOUGHT SUCH A CONFERENCE WOULD REACH AGREEMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

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5. STATEMENTS BY REPRESENTATIVE LABOR LEADERS ALSO PROTESTED PRESIDENT FORD'S SPEECH. THE PRESIDENT OF THE VENEZUELAN CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS (CTV), SENATOR FRANCISCO OLIVO, STATED THAT THE CTV "REBUFFED" THE POLICIES ANNOUNCED BY FORD AND WAS WORRIED BY THE SEEMING LACK OF COMPREHENSION BY THE UNITED STATES. OTHER CTV LEADERS, REPRESENTING OPPOSITION POLITICAL FACTIONS, TWO MINOR CONFEDERATIONS, THE LEFTIST CUTV AND THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN CODESA,

CALLED FOR THE "REPUDIATION OF FORD'S AGGRESSIVE REMARKS" AND FOR A THIRTY-MINUTE NATIONWIDE WORK HALT TO DEMONSTRATE VENEZUELA'S PROTEST. THE REGIONAL GROUPING OF THE INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS' FEDERATION (IMF), IN ITS SECOND CONFERENCE FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN AREAS, ALSO WENT ON RECORD AS OPPOSING PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENTS. THE CONFERENCE WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 70 DELEGATES FROM METALWORKERS' FEDERATIONS IN 13 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING IMF SUB-SECRETARY DANIEL BENEDICT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, SPEECHES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CARACA09522
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740270-0943
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740916/aaaaankg.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: CARACAS 9503
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinjw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16 JUL 2002 by maustmc>; APPROVED <03 FEB 2003 by martinjw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER POLITICAL REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S DETROIT ENERGY SPEECH
TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, VE, US, WPC, (FORD, GERALD R)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005